

Grade Descriptions for Cambridge International AS Level Media Studies 9607

What are grade descriptions?

Grade descriptions describe the level of performance typically demonstrated by candidates achieving the different grades awarded for a qualification. For Cambridge International AS Levels, they describe performance at three levels – grades ‘E’, ‘C’ and ‘A’.

Grade descriptions sit alongside other key documents that illustrate examination standards, including:

- the syllabus, which presents what students should be taught over a course of study and explains how this is assessed
- the specimen assessment materials, which exemplify the structure of the assessment and the kinds of tasks that candidates complete
- grade thresholds, which show the total mark required to achieve a grade.

Grade descriptions are produced with a wide range of audiences in mind. For teachers, they support lesson planning and curriculum development, while students may gain useful insights into what is required to achieve a high grade and what candidate performance at lower grades typically looks like. For university admissions staff and employers, and those less familiar with Cambridge, they paint a picture of typical performance at different grades.

Cambridge publishes grade descriptions for a qualification once examinations have taken place for the first time, and we review them when a qualification is substantially revised. They are developed by highly experienced examiners who understand performance standards in the subject area and have studied samples of candidate work.

How do I use this resource?

Grade descriptions are presented as a grid, with content areas at the start of each row and the different grades at the top of each column.

The content areas group together various aspects of the syllabus – they reflect topics, assessment objectives, key concepts, syllabus aims and components. The way they are organised is specific to each subject.

For each content area, there is a descriptor for each grade. Reading across the row from left to right, the descriptors represent increasing levels of performance, with each grade descriptor building on, and including, the last.

Each column represents overall performance at a particular grade. Reading down the column from top to bottom, the descriptors capture the range of knowledge, understanding and skills that a candidate comfortably achieving the grade is likely to demonstrate.

Cambridge produces grade descriptions to support teaching and learning and the interpretation of candidate scores and grades. We do not use them to set grade thresholds. As such, they cannot be used to challenge the grade awarded to any individual candidate.

Grade Descriptions

Area of knowledge, understanding and skills	Typical performance at grade E	Typical performance at grade C	Typical performance at grade A
Media concepts and terminology	Students have limited knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of media and use appropriate terminology only occasionally, and then sometimes inaccurately.	Students show clear knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of media but may also have some misunderstanding. They employ media-specific terminology but not always accurately.	Students demonstrate sophisticated knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of media and are able to articulate this by accurately using a wide range of media-specific terminology.
	They analyse a moving image extract with limited knowledge and understanding of technical codes and representation. They often use generalisations, for example.	They clearly analyse a moving image extract with some knowledge and understanding of technical codes and representation. They write about how the colour red signifies danger or a femme fatale, for example.	They analyse a moving image extract with sophisticated knowledge and understanding of technical codes and representation. They analyse the effect of editing techniques and how they are used in representations of, for example, gender, race, social class and sexuality.
	They explore media audiences and institutions with limited knowledge and understanding of the media concepts involved.	They explore media audiences and institutions with clear knowledge and understanding of the media concepts involved.	They explore media audiences and institutions with sophisticated knowledge and understanding of the media concepts involved.
Media contexts and critical debates	Students have limited knowledge and understanding of media contexts and critical debates. Discussion is often generalised with limited reference to theory or theorists.	Students show clear knowledge and understanding of media contexts and critical debates but some misunderstanding may be evident. Discussion is appropriate with some reference to well-known theory and theorists.	Students demonstrate sophisticated knowledge and understanding of media contexts and critical debates. Discussion is often sophisticated with detailed references to appropriate theory and theorists.

Area of knowledge, understanding and skills	Typical performance at grade E	Typical performance at grade C	Typical performance at grade A
	<p>They analyse a moving image extract with limited knowledge and understanding of debates focusing on the representation of social groups. They often generalise debates, writing about how the media causes people from different social groups to think in a particular way, for example.</p> <p>They explore media audiences and institutions with limited knowledge and understanding of media contexts and critical debates.</p>	<p>They analyse a moving image extract with clear knowledge and understanding of debates focusing on the representation of social groups. They are able to clearly identify how different groups in society are being portrayed and what signs are indicating this to an audience, for example.</p> <p>They explore media audiences and institutions with clear knowledge and understanding of media contexts and critical debates.</p>	<p>They analyse a moving image extract with sophisticated knowledge and understanding of debates focusing on the representation of social groups. They can develop an argument around how, and why, a media producer has portrayed different social groups in different ways, for example.</p> <p>They explore media audiences and institutions with sophisticated knowledge and understanding of media contexts and critical debates.</p>
<p>Analysing media products</p>	<p>Students have a limited understanding of how meaning is created in media texts. They occasionally employ reference to appropriate media texts.</p> <p>They offer a limited analysis of a moving image extract in terms of technical codes and representation of social groups. They may state that a filmmaker uses an establishing shot but not explain why, for example.</p> <p>They draw upon limited examples from case studies to support limited responses to given questions about audiences and institutions.</p>	<p>Students show some understanding of how meaning is created in media texts. Their understanding is supported by some references to media texts.</p> <p>They offer a clear analysis of a moving image extract in terms of technical codes and representation of social groups. They identify particular shots and can explain how they present readable signs to an audience, for example.</p> <p>They draw upon clear examples from case studies to support responses to given questions about audiences and institutions.</p>	<p>Students demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of how meaning is created in media texts. They use detailed references to media texts to support their own thinking and to demonstrate the ideas of others.</p> <p>They offer insightful analysis of a moving image extract in terms of technical codes and representation of social groups. They explain that parallel editing allows the viewer to experience two or more points of view in parallel, allowing for contrasting representations of characters, for example.</p> <p>They draw upon sophisticated examples from case studies to support responses to given questions about audiences and institutions.</p>

Area of knowledge, understanding and skills	Typical performance at grade E	Typical performance at grade C	Typical performance at grade A
Evaluating own production work	<p>Students offer a limited reflection on the process of producing their own production. Their outcomes tend towards the descriptive rather than the critically reflective.</p> <p>They produce simple responses to the set questions from the syllabus with limited focus on the evaluation of their production.</p> <p>They respond to the questions about their own productions with limited clarity about conventions, representation, audience, distribution, skills development and integrating technology.</p>	<p>Students are clearly able to reflect, sometimes critically, on the process of producing their own production.</p> <p>They produce responses to the set questions from the syllabus with clear focus on the evaluation of their production.</p> <p>They respond to the questions about their own productions with clarity about conventions, representation, audience, distribution, skills development and integrating technology.</p>	<p>Students reflect on their own production in a sophisticated way. They offer a critical commentary on the process, skills, knowledge and understanding needed.</p> <p>They produce sophisticated responses to the set questions from the syllabus with a strong focus on the evaluation of their production.</p> <p>They respond insightfully to the questions about their own productions with a sophisticated understanding of conventions, representation, audience, distribution, skills development and integrating technology.</p>
Using media tools	<p>Students use media tools to produce a limited video or print media text; there are weaknesses in application.</p> <p>They use media tools in a limited way to research, plan and produce a print or video media text based upon a given brief.</p> <p>They demonstrate limited skill in the use of their chosen media tools (for example video or still cameras, video or photo editing software or desktop publishing software).</p>	<p>Students clearly use media tools to produce a video or print media text, but with some inconsistencies in quality of application.</p> <p>They clearly use appropriate media tools to research, plan and produce a print or video media text based upon a given brief.</p> <p>They demonstrate some skill in the use of their chosen media tools (for example video or still cameras, video or photo editing software or desktop publishing software).</p>	<p>Students demonstrate a sophisticated level of skill in using media tools to produce an effective video or print media text.</p> <p>They use appropriate media tools in a sophisticated way to research, plan and produce a print or video media text based upon a given brief.</p> <p>They demonstrate high levels of skill in the use of their chosen media tools (for example video or still cameras, video or photo editing software or desktop publishing software).</p>

Area of knowledge, understanding and skills	Typical performance at grade E	Typical performance at grade C	Typical performance at grade A
Applying knowledge and understanding to productions	<p>Students are able to apply limited knowledge and understanding of media concepts covered in the course of study to their productions.</p> <p>They use their learning in a limited way to inform their production.</p> <p>They produce a media text that shows that they have applied their knowledge and understanding of media concepts in a limited way. They often misunderstand both how to use equipment and how to appeal to an appropriate audience.</p>	<p>Students clearly apply a range of knowledge and understanding of media concepts covered in the course of study to their productions.</p> <p>They clearly use their learning to inform their production.</p> <p>They produce a media text that shows that they have clearly applied their knowledge and understanding of media concepts. They have an understanding of both how to use equipment and how to appeal to an appropriate audience.</p>	<p>Students demonstrate a sophisticated level of knowledge and understanding of media concepts covered in the course of study to their productions.</p> <p>They use their learning in a sophisticated way to inform their production.</p> <p>They produce a media text that shows that they have applied their knowledge and understanding of media core concepts in an insightful way. They have a sophisticated understanding of both how to use equipment and how to appeal to an appropriate audience.</p>

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